

Office of the Mayor Paul Finley

City of Madison 100 Hughes Road Madison, AL 35758 256.772.5603

News Release

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For more information, contact: Taylor Edge, 256.772.5602

City of Madison Named Second Best Place to Grow Up by U.S. News & World Report

At a time when the Madison County community has received nearly unprecedented rankings and recognition for its job growth, technology creation, and quality of life, along comes yet another major media recognition for this community—*U.S. News & World Report* has named Madison the second best place in the country to grow up.

The report cites numerous outdoor activities that are available in Madison as well as its proximity to Huntsville and the U.S. Space & Rocket Center's Space Camp. The report also says that residents of Madison "tend to be well-paid and highly educated."

"Honors like this continue to validate what a wonderful community we live in," Mayor Paul Finley said. "The scoring criteria of low crime, strong schools, green space and fun activities describe Madison to a tee."

Finley added, "A happy childhood stems from parental involvement. Our community focuses on our children and the activities that enhance their lives."

Chamber of Commerce of Huntsville/Madison County Board Chair Irma Tuder said the benefits of the recognition would help the community in its recruitment efforts.

"I don't know if I've ever seen a year where our community has received so much positive recognition – and they don't get much better than this one. Congratulations to Mayor Finley and everyone in Madison – this *U.S. News & World Report* ranking is a tribute to the entire area. Obviously this kind of recognition certainly helps us in our continued efforts to attract targeted industries and skilled workforce to our community."

Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle praised Madison and Mayor Finley.

"I want to offer my congratulations to the City of Madison on this terrific recognition. From day one, Mayor Paul Finley and the City of Madison have not only helped to celebrate in Huntsville's successes - but they have helped contribute such an incredible part to our community's quality of life. This community is a special place because we each pull together and realize that our successes are not because of individuals - but because we work together. We are proud to celebrate this recognition with them," Battle said.

The recognition associated with the ranking will benefit all of Madison County, according to Madison County Commission Chairman Mike Gillespie.

"It is the city of Madison, the city of Huntsville being part of Madison County and working together that makes this a great community," Gillespie said. "And we are all in this together working to improve the quality of life and job opportunities in our community. This is just a tremendous honor not only for the City of Madison, but for all of us in this community."

Madison City Schools Superintendent Dr. Dee Fowler cited the community's commitment to education as a major incentive for the ranking.

"This is a great honor for our city. We feel that this accolade is grounded in the dedication and commitment that our community has to education and the general welfare of our children. Our school district is so fortunate to have such a caring staff, devoted parents, and supportive city government," said Fowler.

U.S. News & World Report's Best Places to Grow Up of 2009:

- 1. Virginia Beach, Va.
- 2. Madison, Ala.
- 3. San Jose, Calif.
- 4. Overland Park, Kan.
- 5. **Boston**
- 6. **Denver**
- 7. Rochester, Minn.
- 8. Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- 9. Plano, Texas
- 10. **Edison, N.J.**

This recognition comes on the heels of CNN/Money Magazine ranking Madison 49th on their list of Best Places to Live in towns under 50,000 people and Huntsville being the 2009 #1 Best City by Kiplinger's. Madison County was selected by Forbes.com as the most affordable place to weather the economic downturn as well.

About U.S. News & World Report's methodology

U.S. News & World Report analyzed some 2,000 different communities based on the criteria of low crime rate, strong school system, amount of green space and family events present, and number of children in the area. The top 10 communities were selected upon further review of the 2,000 other places.